

**APPENDIX A**

41. (twice amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

depositing a dielectric film with a thickness greater than about 40 Angstroms over a semiconductor substrate; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature greater than about 450 °C, said steam provided in a ratio of at least 0.005 relative to other gases present in the rapid thermal process chamber.